PS 3525
.A148
W5
1909
Copy 1

When Lilacs Bloom

AND OTHER POEMS

By Maretta R. McCaughey

Class PS3525
Book .A148W5
Copyright No. 1909

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

When Lilacs Bloom
AND OTHER POEMS

By

MARETTA R. McCAUGHEY

Published
After her Death, January 7, 1907,
By Her Husband and Children

CINCINNATI, OHIO
PRESS OF JENNINGS AND GRAHAM

PS3525
.A148W5
1909

Copyright, 1909,
By G. B. McCaughey

LIBRARY of CONGRESS
Two Copies Received
MAY 10 1909
Copyright Entry
Apr. 26, 1909
CLASS a XXc. No.
237694
COPY B

To

The Friends

Of the Author of These Poems, Whose Love
She Prized, This Book is Affectionately
Dedicated By Her Husband and Children.

G. B. McCaughey,
Edith B. McCaughey, Roy B. McCaughey.

CONTENTS

When Lilacs Bloom, ... 9
When Summer Croons Old Earth to Sleep, ... 10
To Find the Best, ... 11
"For lo! The Winter is Gone," 12
Harvest, ... 13
Strange Things, ... 14
Love's Flowers, ... 15
Trust, ... 16
The Needed Touch, ... 17
Had We a Gift, ... 18
My Italy, ... 19
Prayer of the Brittany Fisherman, ... 20
The Turn in the Lane, ... 21
Idle Silences, ... 22
Fog, ... 24
"That Far Country," 25
Tribute to McKinley, ... 26
"Shortly Before Dawn," 27
Resurrection Morning, ... 28
Died—Aged Eighty, ... 29
Unser Vater, ... 30
Only One Way Home, ... 31
The Lily Taught Me, ... 32
What If Some Day, ... 34
The Leaf and the Star, ... 35
Perennial, ... 36
Brierdale in Arcady, ... 37

Love's Path, ... 38
The World at Large, ... 39
With the Edelweiss to the Sea, ... 40
Fern Seed, ... 42
Spring Rondelay, ... 44
Stars in the Fire, ... 45
Nest Building, ... 46
Locust Blossoms, ... 47
Summer at the Ohio Farm, ... 48
Summer at the Indiana Farm, ... 49
A Rain in June, ... 50
Apple Blossoms, ... 51
June Songs, ... 52
Sapphire and Opal, ... 53
The Shadow of Summer, ... 54
Through Country Lanes, ... 56
The Forsaken Road, ... 57
Sing, ... 58
A Rest in the Music, ... 59
Elspeth Knitting, ... 60
Margaret's Youth, ... 61
Little Rhody, ... 62
"Jess Nice and Comfor'able," 66
A Legend of Exmoor, ... 68
Defying Fate, ... 72
O Nature, Unsympathetic! 73
As Mahmoud Did, ... 74
Charity, ... 75
Our Limitation, ... 76
Hatred in Nubibus, ... 77
Thy Beulah Land, ... 78
One Flower of All, ... 79
Motherhood, ... 80

Identification, ... 81
The Brother of Low Estate, ... 82
The Brotherhood of Man, ... 84
Ploughed Under, ... 85
Her Gift, ... 86
Let the Flag Be There, ... 88
The Outgrown Nest, ... 89
Questionings, ... 90
With Broken Harp, ... 91
Found, ... 92
Hester Prynne, ... 93
Plagiarism, ... 94
Why Waits Queen Summer? 95
Indian Summer, ... 96
The Thanksgiving Test, ... 97
The Day's Reckoning, ... 98
St. Silverus—A Christmas Legend, ... 99
An Autumn Thought, ... 100

When Lilacs Bloom

I always see the dear old homes
Framed in between the purple plumes
That shade, we know, the "company rooms"
When lilacs bloom.

The world seems now a better place.
I gladly turn a happier face
And keep in step with quickened pace
When lilacs bloom.

As we grow old it always seems
Less time between the purple gleams,
And more and more we have our dreams
Of some glad time the years may bring
Of lilacs' constant blossoming.
Then we shall know Eternal Spring
When lilacs bloom.

"When Summer Croons Old Earth to Sleep"

'T is in September days when all the bees
Go winging back, by early twilight caught
E'er half the honey 's gathered that they sought
In golden plumes and in the purple lees
Of hanging grapes. Then sweet the sunshine flees
As tho' a mother's hand had deftly wrought
A shadow o'er the child that will have naught
Of sleep while yet a ray of light he sees.

Some day, when Summer croons our years away
Mayhap we 'll hie us home with tasks half done—
Mayhap we 'll see the twilight of Life's latest day
With sad, rebellious eyes that seek the sun,
Then sweet 't will be to find that Shadow Gray
Is like a mother's hand to shut the world away.

To Find the Best

Though the commonest songs are sweet to hear,
And gladly we welcome the robin's cheer,
Yet we listen, entranced, to sweeter songs
From the dense, dark woods where the thrush belongs.

In the leafy gloom the nightingale bides—
In the far, blue sky the lark's song hides.
On the ocean floor lies a wondrous store
Of beauty we never shall see on shore.

Then why should our hearts go sorrowing so
When a darkening shadow rests so low
That we miss the sun? Hid there in the shade
Mayhap God's tenderest touch is laid.

'For Lo! The Winter is Gone!"

(Song of Solomon.)

O, the rose-red sap is rising
  In the apple trees again!
O, the dainty, pink-veined tracing!
O, the bits of color chasing
  Thro' the sweet spring air again!

Are we old? We feel new stirring
  Dreams now rose tints that were gray.
Are we young? O! Youth is glorious
When the warm, spring air, victorious,
  Drives the cold and snow away.

Naught too hard for fresh beginning
  Life is pushing thro' the earth.
Ever new is Spring's returning—
Ever new the pulses yearning,
  Old or young, for newer birth.

Harvest

O, the glory on grain and tree!
O, the joy that it is to be
Alive to see
The prophet's picture of fruitage fair
Crowning the clod and seedling there
Immortally!
And yet man falters and will not own
The victory o'er Death that God hath shown.

Strange Things

That a bird can sing and bring
A forgotten thought,
That a rose's hue may do
What words can not—
Bring back to the heart a part
Of childhood's years,
And turn the cycle of time to rhyme
Devoid of tears.

Yes, they may hold and fold
Us in close embrace,
But to song and scent belong
That higher trace
Of a Hand that swift can lift
The meshes crossed,
Thus setting us free to see
That naught is lost.

Love's Flowers

"The Summer flower is to the Summer sweet."
—Shakespeare.

So sweet a floweret Love may grow
For one brief year
That Time forever more may know
No cause for tear.

If to one summer thou art sweet
Let this content
Nor waste the glorious hours fleet
In discontent.

What matter if the year can tell
When frost stars gleam
How fair a bloom thou gav'st so well
To summer's dream?

Trust

To-day God knows if primrose bloom
Or nettle's sting shall find their room
Within my life.
To-night He knows what lines of light
May cross each other on my sight
When Dark is rife.

To-morrow shall His knowledge fail
To guide my shallop that it sail
Past hidden bar?
To-day, to-morrow can not mean
An ill His love hath not foreseen
And known afar.

The Needed Touch

A bulb I hold, and fold
In earth. Its roots send shoots
Of lily stems so tall that all
  Who see will smile
That hidden deep in sleep
  Such beauty grew the while.

Sometimes we feel revealed
  The self-same thing
In human hearts, whose part
  In life we bring,
Full oft to view with few
Forecastings of the rare, fair
Blossoms unrevealed.

Might not our love, above
The life concealed,
Sometimes enfold the cold
  Dull thing and give
That quickening gain o'er pain
  That bids men live?

Had We a Gift

We say, Could we but sing
And thrill and stir the heart
With voice too sweet for art,
What harmonies would ring,
Could we but sing!

We say, Could we paint sky
And sea and mountains grand,
We 'd bring from shadow land
Rare scenes where fancies fly,
Could we paint sky!

Could we but take the stone
And guide the chisel so
That symmetry should grow,
What perfect forms alone
We 'd carve in stone!

Alas! We know nor melody,
Nor rapturous hint of color shown,
Nor power of life in frozen stone
By touch of ours can ever be,
Alas! not one can be!

But life hath music—wordless songs
Born of content; and there are hands
So gently skilled they carve Love's bands
Round hearts of stone. To these belong;
And thou may'st carve and paint and sing,
Not for the world, but for its King.

My Italy

"Past the Alpine summits of great pain
Lieth thine Italy."
—Rose Terry Cooke

There is a Presence that can lend
A joy—a soothing sense of rest
To weary days—a joy so blest
That heights or depths of weary pain
We almost count with sense of gain.

I know my Italy is there, and God
With loving tenderness has trod
The path before. I do not dread
The Alpine summits overhead.

Prayer of the Brittany Fisherman

"Keep me, my God! My boat is small; and wide
The ocean stretches far from any shore."

With rough hands lightly clasped and head bent low
In tender reverence, he speaks his Guide
Upon the stormy sea, lest ill betide.
Then, henceforth leans he on his fragile oars
With fearless heart, since One doth watch beside
His boat thro' all that dreary space from shore.

O, soul! bespeak this Guide upon Life's sea,
Then, fearless, turn thy oars against its waves,
He knows when storm-tossed billows carry thee
Beyond thy strength, and He will quickly save
Thy fragile barque. Pray only, "God, keep me,"
And summer calm may rest on stormiest sea.

The Turn in the Lane

Was it yesterday in the morning air
That we saw the bloom on the hedgerows fair,
And ran, with eager, childish feet,
Thro' flowers and dew-wet grass to meet
The turn in the lane?

The way seems long to-day, and hot—
How far it seems—that cool, green spot!
How soon our steps much slower grew,
How often our friends were lost to view
At the turn in the lane!

When, one by one, we have met Life's turns
And gained the knowledge of him who learns
That the lane of life must narrow down
To a dusty path thro' hedgerows brown
To the turn in the lane.

May we feel a Presence leading us on
Past the dusty stiles to the turn beyond!
Then we will not walk in doubt and fear,
Since we know our Father awaits us here
At the turn in the lane.

Idle Silences

Full oft we hear of idle word
That never conscious meaning stirred
Within the mind, and yet the years
Swift turning brought the saddest tears
That it was said.
'T is true, and yet
Full oft we think doth vain regret
So follow silence. Once I knew
That some kind word of mine was due
An ailing friend. I said, Some day
I 'll speak the word, then went my way,
Content to let the silence stay,
Nor dreamed that she could go away
To that Dread Silence where no speech
Of human love or hate may reach.

Sometimes I think we take no note
Of all the sound from noisy throat
Of singing bird, but let it cease
And soon we miss it, ill at ease
And conscious of a wrong indeed
So jarring that it righting needs.
The idle pebble of a word
May, haply, fall where never stirred

The evil ripple in the hearer's mind,
While silence darkens all, we find
With sad commotion.
Ah, friend,
While yet we may, let us attend
Not less to idle word, but more
To that vague hush which, reckoned o'er,
Affrights us in account with Life.
Far more than words with evil rife.

Fog

I was so near the garden wall!
So near the vines and maples tall—
The lawn, the house, each well-known place,
And yet the fog hid every trace
Of every dear, familiar face.

A little world drew near apace
And shut me in. So small and round,
So narrow, dark, and cold I found
No hint of all that lay so near
Of beauty, life, and things that cheer.

But soon a rift grew wide and high,
And sunlight flashing from blue sky
Revealed each well-remembered spot
The fog had lately blotted out.

Since then, when days bring mist and doubt
And shut the love of God without,
I 've seen full many a sunbeam shed
Its waves of light above my head.
And as I look thro' rifts of cloud
I find familiar paths to God.

"That Far Country

So far that country lies away—
So far, when youth is strong and gay,
And Life has known no yesterday,
So far it lies away.

So far when our beloved go—
'T is far, indeed, or there would flow
The sweet love words we cherish so
When our beloved go.

So far, so far, yet swift the years
And oft the shore, outlined thro' tears,
Seems very near and soothes our fears—
So far, but swift the years.

Tribute to McKinley

"God's will be done."—President McKinley's last words.

Write now, O poets, but thy verse must be
The grandest tribute ever sung or said—
Ye who would write us verses for our dead,
Dip deep thy pen in all the toiling sea
Of humankind and write how dear was he
To those who struggle there for daily bread—
Then lift thy pen and touch the heights instead,
Where laurels crowned him all deservedly.

O poets, write, but let thy verses bring
To us, who mourn a leader, statesman, friend,
This better thing for our true comforting—
God's will was his. In all the mighty trend
Of his eventful life so has he won
World plaudits and great love, tho' life is done.

"Shortly Before Dawn"

How still the guards about the sacred tomb
Ere yet that strange, sweet message broke the gloom
With peace unknown and surety in the room
Of scoffing doubt! What wondrous flower
Of Love, new blossoming with gracious dower,
Sprang forth! What melodies were heard that hour!
What sweet, new Voice seemed through the darkness
drawn,
Waking the world to know Death's night was gone!
What sweet, new touch lay on each aching heart
With wondrous soothing, past all mortal art,
That bade its sorrows cease, its fears depart.

O, Messenger beloved! O, Voice sublime!
O, Melodies! O, Touch of Love Divine!
Our darkest hour is yet God's chosen Time.

Resurrection Morning

"The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."
—Lead, Kindly Light.

But who is it who can, at first, be sure
The morn will come? Who can endure
The long night's dark with all its spectral gloom?
The dread uncertainty—that silent room
The darkness fills where never any touch or word
That trembling hand has felt or throbbing ear has heard,
When such dear hands have loosed from life
And we must meet alone the strife—
Alone? God help us, but for most
There is no thought but that all love is lost.

How dulled the stricken heart may be
To all that comforts only God can see
And He, with never any startling touch,
Sends thro' the darkness first the hush
Preceding dawn and then, with wondrous care,
The soft, gray dawn for us to bear
Until we see through tears' relieving flow
The blessed promise of His morning glow—
The Resurrection Morn. "The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since and lost awhile."

Died—Aged Eighty

(In memory of Reverend Meeks, Findlay, Ohio.)

Never an instant deserted
  The place God had said to him, "Fill;"
Never a yielding of muscles
  Or brain to the strength of the will.
From the dawn, full of rest and ambition
  When life was a glow of delight,
Thro' the morn to life's burning meridian
  And on to the darkening night.

Never a meadow's cool byway
  Had tempted from highway and dust;
Nor bird song or beauty had rivaled
  The strong heart's devotion and trust,
Until God's comforting message
  He heard from the darkening West:
"For thy fourscore years of endeavor
  There remaineth unending rest."

O, heavenly country of promise!
  Of all beautiful things and rare,
None thrill the heart of earth's traveler
  Like the "Rest that remaineth there."
So short seems past struggle and effort
  When life's sun fades away in the West;
So long seems the wondrous requital—
  "For aye there remaineth a rest."

Unser Vater

Our Father! Such a world of tenderness is bound
In these two words. In every tongue the speech
The same sweet, wondrous power doth teach
Of watchful love; and nowhere else is found
Expression true in such harmonious sound
Of all the heart's deep pathos, love to reach
With instant meaning. Never other word can teach
The thrill of Everlasting Strength around
Our human weakness.
O, sweet it is to know
That One doth ever hear and heed our cry
From out earth's darkness, waiting still to show
How vain is fear, how soon can terrors fly
A Father's love. *Unser Vater,* so we cry,
And humbly claim Thy kinship high.

Only One Way Home

If thou wert lost, and one should say to thee,
"I know but one way to thy home; that way
A rocky path o'er mountains drear and gray
With pending storm," thou 'dst say, "Show me
This way." And straightway thou wouldst haste to be
Ready to face all terrors on the way,
Scarce waiting for the dawning of the day,
So glad, so glad the homeward way to see.

God shows us oft that but one way is ours
To the eternal Home, and it may be
That we must leave a path thick-strewn with flowers
For path so bleak and hard we scarce can see
The way for tears; but fail not, for each hour
Will surely bring Home's shelter nearer thee.

The Lily Taught Me

I found in my garden a lily white
Daintily sweet in the morning light.
A dewdrop lay in its throat of snow
And the sunlight gave it a diamond's glow.

But the lily faded, and Summer passed,
And Winter's ice-chain bound it fast.

Then I saw a marvelous lily of frost,
Sparkling far more than the one I had lost,
And the frost king laid it on bed of sheen
Where the mid-summer lily before had been.

But the cruel sunshine quickly sent
My lily again into banishment.

With chisel I made by a fountain's brim
Another lily with snowy rim.
O, it was fair in its marble snow,
With the frozen dewdrops sparkling so.
I laughed to think how the sun would try
To drink my nectared lily-cup dry.

At last! I cried, I have one to stay!
It is mine, my lily, from day to day.
But a Presence came with a sadder touch
Than the sun had sent thro' the noonday flush.

I could see in the sparkling petals of stone
No hint of life; it was death alone.

I marveled much that the flowers dead
Had never inspired a somber dread,
While the lily I wished to immortal be
Had only a message of death for me.
Could it be, I questioned with reverent speech,
That the fading flower was sent to teach
The beautiful step from earth to air
Of the living germ that slumbered there?

Heart, art thou lonely with lily of stone?
Forget it and think of God's lilies alone,
Not lost, as we deemed them, but growing more fair
In His beautiful garden awaiting us there.

What If, Some Day

What if, some day, when clouds have thrown
A dreary gloom o'er all the room,
A sweet and friendly soul should come
And win the sunshine in;
Should cheer your heart, and make it glow
With hope's fresh impulse. You would know
Your place no more with trace
Of cloud or gloom: you 'd welcome him
With joyful haste.

Yet, One doth seek
Us in our narrow rooms, close shut
With doubt's dark shades about—
One who doth long to send
Such transformation, as thy generous Friend,
To all sad hours of gloomy doubt;
And you—and I—still keep
Him locked without.

The Leaf and the Star

So far apart! yet the star is glowing
This summer night
With love-lit rays in the azure showing
Its sweet, soft light.
And high on the maple, shyly keeping
Tryst with the star,
A dainty leaf is slyly peeping
Thro' leafy bars.

Too high, you say, for an earth-born thing—
O winds, ye wait!
For Love will come with a ready wing
Ere it is late.
Now see! the leaf is crimson and gold!
O winds, stay down!
For a frost star sparkles upon the fold
Of a bridal gown.

Death, you whisper; but can you tell?
Winds, cease your strife.
Death or life, there 's a marriage bell
And Love is Life.

Perennial

"Just a foolish flower that forgot to blow
Till the frosts were white again."

So it seemed as the dead leaves lightly tossed—
Just a careless waste of the hours that fly
In blossoming time. That day had gone by
For fruition now, and there was the frost
With Death's own touch on the dry stalk crossed
By no flower or fruit. So deep they lie
The roots that send up for us by and by
The bloom and the fruit that we tho't were lost.

Did they forget? Ah, the turn of the years
Oft shows a blossoming soul we had thought
But a barren life, and then appears
A beauty and use we had vainly sought
In the bloom of a day. Yet men judge so
Forgetting perennial's growth in the snow.

Brierdale in Arcady

Who e'er sang of Love's own vale—
  Arcady the beautiful—
And gave hint of hidden dale
  Where the brier roses grow
  In tangled beauty thorn-pinned so
That no sweethearts e'er have found
Pathway through to smoother ground?

Yet, 't is there, all lovers know,
  There in lovely Arcady.
But Love's rose-red petals glow
  So enchanting that they see
  Naught but Rose of Arcady.

Presto! what a change may be
Quickly seen in Arcady
  When two lovers, unawares,
  Meet the thorns in hiding there!
Yet, O sweethearts! Eros, kind
Built that thorny hedge you find,
  For the dearest place of all
  Lies beside that thorn-hid wall.

Love's Path

You want to climb far heights sublime
When you love.
Romance says, "Nay, no mountains gray
For true love."

All stories tell of fern and dell
For Love's lore,
And valleys deep alone can keep
Fast Love's door.

Your ideal keep and Love will sleep
Ne'er to awake.
The heights grow cold, have no warm fold
For Love's sake.

O sweetheart, choose! but do not lose
The path I go—
Choose one too high for passerby
But sweetly low.

The World at Large

The world at large has countless treasure—
My world none—
Gold and rank and gems, but pleasures
Scarcely one.
In the world at large are mansions
Men have built.
But their cunning, costly fashions
Hide much guilt.
In the world at large are cities
Vast and fair,
Heartaches, too, that no one pities—
Days of care.
In my world no heartache passes
Without sign—
Quick the tender heart-throb flashes
Love to mine.
Leave your world and enter this one—
Love is here:
Let the world at large say which one
God holds dear.

With the Edelweiss to the Sea

In Switzerland there is a river
Whose source is the ice and snow
Far up on the Alpine summits,
Where the Edelweiss only grows.
There 's a quaint and beautiful fancy
In a legend the Swiss still tell
Of this flower of love and friendship
And the river they know so well.

They say that the Spirit of Flowers
Will cast from the cliff above
The delicate, snow-white blossoms—
The beautiful emblem of love.
They tell how the sun-touched petals
Are first to bring warmth to the stream,
Ice-locked on the mountain summit
With the sea but a far-off dream.

Then the blossoms forever are carried
In the heart of the stream as it flows,
Though the Spirit of Flowers grants others—
E'en the beautiful Alpine rose.
The peasants will watch thro' the village
Where the banks are alluring and sweet
With the songs of bird-sirens, enticing
True lovers in tryst there to meet.

Through the shadows so cool and inviting
The rustic will often peep low
To see if his best loved river
Still carries its blossoms of snow.
And well for his faith that ever
The Edelweiss snow he may see,
For to him they are symbols perfect
Of his dear one's constancy.

Fern Seed

What was it, do you ask me,
That threw oblivious shade
Upon the merry dancers
In all the masquerade?
Well, dear, you know the legend
That he who holds the seed
Of dainty fronds has magic
To hide himself at need.

You think that day is over—
That no one stands within
Our lighted, crowded parlors
Who is not counted in.
But the legend now reverses
The old-time-magic power,
For lost to me were all things
But a long-forgotten hour.

The palms and roses melted
Into blossoms by a stile,
And gorgeous, velvet sofas
Were dusty steps the while.
You spoke to me last evening:
You even touched my hand,
Before I felt your presence
Within that shadow land.

My "fern seed" was a cluster
Of wilding roses sweet
That rested on the bosom
Of your cousin Marguerite.
A bridge of youthful memories
Those brier roses threw
Across the years—so many
To a meadow in the dew.

Beside the stile my sweetheart—
Wild roses in her hair,
Stood waiting where wild roses
Were straggling everywhere.
Upon the steps we rested
In June's own perfumed air,
While I tossed the dainty petals
Upon her brow and hair.

The human heart is stranger
Than the legends ever tell;
It waits, long years it may be,
To prove its weakness well.
But some day comes a searchlight
That throws in darkest shade
The world that moves about you,
And shows you where you laid

Long since, with never mourning,
An hour with rapture fraught—
So pure and holy that you only
Its dimmest meaning caught.

Spring Rondelay

O, Spring! I am waiting for you,
I have need of the blue
In the hue of your bluebird's wing.
I must have for my brush the hint
Of your rosy finger's print.

Tho' I paint, tho' I write, I cry,
O, Season of Youth, draw nigh.
What else for the artist's brush,
What else for the poet's touch?

For we sigh, if of Spring bereft
What else for the world is left?

Stars in the Fire

I am sixteen to-day!
Life is wondrously gay.
Tell me truly what joy without sorrow's alloy
Stands waiting the hours of these slow years of ours.

Come, tell me my fate
Pretty stars in my grate,
Foretelling power should dwell in the hour—
It is night—it is late—now the witches should wait.
Ah! you sparkle and glow, but why tremble you so?
Does Fate, then, decree cruel things there for me?
No, it can not be sad
With the whole world so glad.

* * * * * *

I am sixty to-day,
Life grows quiet and gray.
But, stars in my grate, came you never so late,
Still the Future so blank would the Past have to thank
For its knowledge of Fate.
Now, you whisper too late
What Life's pages revealing
Have told, naught concealing,
If your Past has been glad it can not be sad.

Nest Building

High in the top of the stately elm,
  Or low in the lilac's plumy bush;
Snug in the eaves above the porch,
  Or down where the early morning flush
Scarcely hints 'mid clods and stones,
  That day has broken the night-time hush.

Building homes! Does it matter, think,
  That each must differ in size and view?
Does the chippy fret that the oriole
  Hangs safely dry from the drops of dew?
Nay, never jarring note is heard
  In nesting time, when love is true.

Ever the same sweet home-note rings,
  Whether from lark or the gentle dove,
Or patient chippy down in the grass,
  Or flashing jay in the blue above—
Whether of twigs and down inlaced,
  Or of mud and stones, the note is—Love.

Locust Blossoms

Just a tiny cluster of fragrant bloom
That sent thought away
From the office desk and the dingy room
To a child at play.

I saw the meadow and grassy swell
Of my father's fields,
I tasted the water from out a well
That a windlass yields.

O, weary the distance that lay between
The blossoming years,
And now I must see the familiar scene
Thro' a mist of tears.

For I 'd held in my heart Life's clamor for gold
And would not heed
The beautiful story the blossoms told
Of love and its need.

Summer at the Ohio Farm—1886

The golden-rod's plumes are nodding,
Then Summer must surely go.
The thistle-down brings the message,
But I will not read it so.

O, beautiful, beautiful Summer!
Turn back a cycle for me;
Hide deep in the iron-weed's purple—
Too deep for the frost to see.

Summer at the Indiana Farm—1897

The thistle-down turned to snowflakes.
  The Frost's jeweled lance cut low
The glorious beauty of Summer
  And covered it over with snow.

But the years—ah! they 've brought me
  New summers as fair as the old,
For each new season returning
  The same sweet story has told.

A Rain in June

Such soft, still sweeps of air!
No agonizing tempest there.
One scarcely knew a storm was near
Until the thunder met the ear.
A hurried dash of sparkly drops,
Like sudden pushing in of stops.
They cease, and then a low, sweet strain
On perfumed air brings the refrain.

A catching up of all sweet scent—
Rose, honeysuckle, locust blent,
And o'er it all a rainbow throws
Its trailing glory to a rose.
Rain wet, it lifts its beauteous face
More lovely with the tender trace
Of recent tears to gently hide
The haughty signs of queenly pride.

Apple Blossoms

From a gnarled old tree, a spell
Is flung as the spring air blows
That comes not from lily or rose.
Too deep for a lily-bell to tell
Or a rose's fragrant breath to touch
In the glorious summer's hush.

'T is a fragrance sweet that long ago
Lay in a blossom's roseate glow.

It is more than a present sense.
'T is a clear, delicious thrill
With a subtle hint of will
That can laugh with a joy intense
Through the years when our feet must stray
So far from the orchard way.

June Songs

June songs are old but ever new,
The rhythmic music running through
The sweet June days. No song of pen
Can ever bring such sounds to men.
And when they fade—for June must go
With summer roses 'neath the snow,
Their memory lifts our thoughts away
From present gloom to perfect day;
To lands beyond all finite gloom,
Where never Time can change the bloom.
No "rose of warning" blossoms there
In all that heavenly perfumed air,
But all that makes our June so fair
Is multiplied and garnered there.

Sapphire and Opal

Only sand and clay! Yet the azure sky
Drops low in the one like a summer sea,
And we call it a type of constancy;
The other, with wonderful tints that fly
Reflecting bright hues of the days that die
With to-morrow a sweet uncertainty.
Only sand and clay! For ages, may be,
Have the hurrying crowds oft passed them by.
Then a morning dawned when a master's eye
Pried deep in the complex veins of the clay
And freed the opaline tints of the sky.
And a skillful touch on the sands so gray
Showed the Sapphire's blue of a sky serene.
We cry, So dull a world that had not seen!

O, Master of souls! Do we fail to see
Through our mortal clay the likeness to Thee?

The Shadow of Summer

The snow lay heaped by the roadside,
And Winter reigned supreme.
Dead leaves were whirling with snowflakes
And Summer seemed like a dream.
"Summer is dead as my youth is,"
I said. "There is naught but cold;
Warmth and flowers and summer
All fail us as we grow old."

Chance led my steps to the doorway
And there, as I looked at the sky,
Across the western horizon
A shadow was drifting by—
A soft, sweet mountain of color,
Warmth on its downy crest—
A peace, like the Summer noontide,
And full of its quiet rest.

No shadow e'er fell without substance;
Somewhere a summer must be
To throw such a perfect shadow
For doubting eyes to see.
Perhaps in some far-off Southland
The bloom and the warmth await
The magic turn of the Seasons
To unlock the golden gate.

And so, tho' the snow lies heavy
On meadow and brook and lawn,
I think of that beautiful promise,
No summer is wholly gone.
And hopefully turn from the shadow
To substance of comfort rare,
That somewhere God hath in keeping
Our youth with its summers fair.

Through Country Lanes

From the woods a quail is calling, "Bob White!"
Then a bobolink's sweet tinkle breaks the flight
Of the meadow lark slow rising from the grass
Lest you cross her tiny threshold as you pass.

Wheatfields lying in that emerald sheen
Of sunshine only in the springtime seen.
All the woods and fields a-thrill with touches
Of the spring—bird songs followed by the hushes
Sweet and solemn, the soft folding up of wings
When the bird has trilled Spring's own interpretings.

O, the long, still days of Summer! when the wheat
Turns to gold and rose-hedge tangles ope to meet
Parent birds with love-notes telling doubt is past:
Flittings, chirpings, sweet beguilings theirs at last.

O, the Autumn! when the purple aster throws
Royal color where the rod of Midas glows.

And the Winter! when transfigured fence-posts stand
Marble columns, leading us to fairy land.

The Forsaken Road

A strange unrest forever is urging
Earth's creatures to turn to paths that are new,
Closing old highways and leaving the blue
Violets free in the grasses surging
Over the road, while a new, diverging,
Turns from the old paths that our fathers knew.
Even the fledglings gayly immerging
Into the road from the nests in the grass
Bear away restless seed plumes as they flee,
Seeking the lands of mirages that pass
Like countries a-near to the ships on the sea.

Forsaken? O, no! Still memories pass—
Ever they 're traveled—the roads 'neath the grass.

Sing

"The morning stars sang together."
—Job.

Give us songs in summer weather,
Sing with bird and bee.
Let all joyful tones in Nature
Find their chord in thee.

Give us songs 'mid blinding snowflakes,
Find the harmony of stars
In the icy, whirling crystals
Dropped from worlds afar.

Sing, tho' trembling lips refuse thee,
Through the agony of years
Thou wilt learn the wordless music
God can fashion out of tears.

The Rest in the Music

I listened, once, to melody so rare,
So sweet and new to me, I found my breath
Close held, as stifling in embrace of death;
Too near divine, it seemed, for mortal ear to bear.
So lately stunned with earth's discordant blare.
Like trav'ler fleeing from the height where death
Seems sure to follow every trembling breath,
I would have fled the soul's diviner air;
But swift a silence fell, while yet the beat
Of rhythmic measure thro' my senses sped,
And I grew strong the melody to greet,
While waiting till the Rest its time had led
Beyond that pause where then the ear could meet,
With quickened sense, the sounds divinely sweet.

Since then, when some strange silence falls between
The joys of life, I hush my sobs and wait
For One who leads Life's harmonies unseen;
And sweet and strange it is that, soon or late,
The melody returns; my grateful heart
Finds larger joy in each harmonious part.

Elspeth Knitting

Hop vines clambering o'er the door
Fretting shadows on the floor.
What does Elspeth sit and knit,
Smiling as the shadows flit
O'er the dainty snood she holds?

O, she 's knitting in its folds
Thoughts too sweet and dear to tell,
And the needles knit them well.

* * * * *

Snowflakes flying in the air—
Elspeth, knitting in her chair,
Smiles no more but sees thro' tears
What the needles knit those years
When her youth and beauty found
Dreams by fairy shadows bound.
Raveled yarn she knits so slow
While she dreams of long ago.

Margaret's Youth

When do you think there laid
A rose on her bonnie braid?
"Never," you say, and smile,
Seeing the gray the while.

But where *was* her youth? you ask,
And it seems like an angel's task
To answer you, telling where
The youth that all should share
Was kept by Life's shadows hid
Till the years no more could bid
It forth for her. But there!
In the dear old face so fair
One may read it now, in truth.

'T is Heaven has kept her youth
And with no earthly stain
'T is Heaven will give again.

Little Rhody

Such a common, freckled face,
No one dreamed it could give place
To a saintly one so fair
That a halo rested where
Just that morn, a hat, all torn,
Hid the tangled curls forlorn.
No one saw the child of ten
When we found a need for men.

'T was in early seventy-three
When we built that church, you see:
And I own it now with shame,
We were bound to have the name
Of the tallest spire about.
So we searched a builder out
That would plan one higher still
Than our brethren's on the hill.

It was building—almost done—
One June morning, when the sun
Shone so bright we all could see
The scaffolding above the tree.
Suddenly a flash of blue,
That was not the sky's own hue,
Caught the eye on topmost peak.
For one instant, who could speak?

Then a loud cry of despair
Joined a mother's, till the air
Seemed a wail of sorrow born
Out of time on such sweet morn.
William Abbott's little Jim,
Just past three, had followed him.
How he got there—who could tell?
Tho' he climbed so wondrous well.

All the men had laughed to see
The little lad go up the tree,
But we think a branch had bent
Toward the church, and out he went
'Till a spring could land him where
He could climb the scaffold there.
There he clung so near the sky
Scarce was heard his baby cry.

In the frantic crowd below
There seemed none so brave to go
Up the shaking scaffold way
That the men had loosed that day:
For the father, climbing down
From inside, heard not a sound.

Was there none the babe to save?
Strong and stalwart men are brave,
But a little lass of ten
Far surpassed their courage then.

Up the creaking boards she flew—
A tiny figure, hat askew,
With the tangled curls aflame
In the sunlight.
In His name
Men have suffered much and won
Credit oft for good deeds done.

But He said it, and 't was shown—
"Greater love hath no man known"
Than when one will gladly yield
His own life to be a shield
For the other.
Up she hurried
While men knelt with faces covered.

When the babe at last she caught
Quick descending, all had thought
No more danger could appall,
And a shout went up from all.
But alas! the board was gone
That the child had mounted on
From the tower window out
To the roof and space without.

One remaining was too slight
For united weight, tho' light;
Without instant's pause she led
Baby Jim upon the thread

That only promised life for one.
Safely o'er, her work was done,
For strong hands were ready there
To take the babe and give a care
To the trembling girl that stood
On that slender bridge of wood.
For one instant Rhody's face
Shone beyond the open space,
Then the frail support was gone!

Friends, when next we looked upon
That little face, we found
A beauty circling it around
Never earthly face could wear,
For the seal of death was there.
And a halo seemed to glow
O'er her head, like pictures show
Of the Christ whose "greater love"
Took her kindred soul above.

"Jess Nice and Comfor'able"

Poor Jack had not heard yet of heaven
  As a city whose streets were of gold.
No hint of its manifold splendors,
  Its beauty and grandeur untold.
He had never read in a Bible,
  Nor listened to sermon or song
Setting forth the glories of Heaven
  And all of its ransomed throng.

But a noble mission teacher
  Had touched, with a skill inspired,
The only key that could open
  The darkened, misguided mind.
She never mentioned the pavement
  Of gold and the jeweled gate;
She had an intuitive knowledge
  That such a description must wait.

She gathered the street boys about her
  And told them of One who had had
But few more comforts and pleasures
  Than the least and most sorrowful lad.
Then, setting down simply commandments—
  Do not steal—do not lie—do not fight,
She made plain to the listening street boys
  That a heavenly home was their right.

Poor Jack felt a glow of approval
In his poor, little desolate heart.
This promise of spiritual comfort
In his mind of the body was part.

He knew that death must bestow this,
But his fears were gone at the thought
That then he could have the comforts
That he had so vainly sought.
His thin, blackened face was uplifted—
His lips softly moved as in prayer,
Then he cried in ecstatic wonder,
"It 's jess nice and comfor'able there!"

A Legend of Exmoor

In that country we call The Doone's Land,
We hear tales, the strangest told,
Of beautiful, helpful fairies
And wizards both bad and bold.

This tale I would tell had a wizard,
Beyond all the others in power,
Who had chosen the highest mountain
And built an eight-sided tower.
The architect was a spider—
As black as the night was he—
And his geometrical figure
Was a wonderful thing to see:
Eight sides, with a window opening—
Thus the castle grew apace
Until the wizard commanded
A glimpse into infinite space.

Then woe to the luckless creature
Who felt the effect of his look,
Or read the dreadful meaning
Of a wizard finger-crook.
For years he plied this magic
With never a checking hand;
For none could withstand the evil
In all that Exmoor land.

But one day a pilgrim journeyed
In sight of that castle grim;
And the wizard saw, and straightway
He gayly beckoned him.
The pilgrim was sad and weary,
His feet left bleeding tracks;
His staff was worn with climbing,
And the castle road was back,
But he felt that such a monster
Had need of a priest to pray,
Tho' he grieved that so vile a hindrance
Should stay his onward way.

Then he turned his face to the castle,
Where the wizard smiled in hate,
Thinking his will had ordered
The pilgrim to pass his gate.

He cried, "Come in, good comrade!"
But the priest stood still at the door.
"Nay, that will I not," said he, "but thou—
Ah! thou shalt come forth no more,
Unless, indeed, thou hast done some good—
Be it only once, to a creature of God:
If only that thou hast saved a worm
From crushing under the sod."

Then the wizard thought thro' his life of sin,
If ever his heart had cared to know
The warmth and peace of a kindly deed.
But alas, alas! The seed we sow,
If thistles alone, can it yield sweet fruit?
"Just one," urged the priest. "The time goes fast."

The wizard, all haggard with fear and pain,
Watched closely the scenes of his life that passed.
But never a generous deed was there;
Ever his power had been for ill;
Ever some victim had yielded up
Life or substance to please his will.

As the castle shook, "Aye, truly!" he cried,
"There is one, good sir, only one—now go!"
"Then name him quick," said the priest, "for, see!
The tower is reeling! Why wait ye so?"

"Myself!" shrieked the wizard, "myself alone."
"Alas!" said the priest, with his cross held high,
While the air grew dark and towers crashed,
"Who cares for himself alone, must die;
For God has written, no man can live
Who never the threads of love doth take
To bind him fast to the Infinite Life
That yielded all for the sinner's sake."

Then the castle and wizard in darkness sank
To the hideous depths of a marshy sea.
But the pilgrim went on to a sunny spot,
And built a chapel on Exmoor lea,
Where ever the world, as it passes, feels
Only the touch of a power for good.
And an impulse grows to help mankind
To a broad and generous brotherhood.

Defying Fate

"Run, Spindles, run, and weave the threads of doom."
—Catullus

Run, spindles, run,
But leave undone
That dark thread's somber crossing;
We 'll weave instead
A wondrous thread
With tints like rainbows tossing.
Drop thread of doom
And in its room
We 'll join Hope's thread, believing
That so ends care
For all who wear
The cloth of their own weaving.

O Nature, Unsympathetic!

O Nature, unsympathetic!
We cry to thee in vain.
We call thee Mother Nature,
But we hear no sweet refrain
To soothe our heart's rebellion
When a Terror holds us fast—
Nay, more, we find thee smiling,
Tho' Death's own shadow passed.

And often, often day dawns
With rose tints hiding gray,
When thou art all prophetic
Of happiness alway,
While there in the shadow waiting
A life-long Sorrow stands
That e'er the rose tints scatter
Will clasp our trembling hands.

Perhaps the Father means us
To look beyond this earth
With its sweet but changing beauty
To the Power that gave it birth.

As Mahmoud Did

Brave Mahmoud found at the temple's gate
The idol, Summât, crowned in state.
And the waiting crowd,
With wailings loud,
Plead hard 'gainst their god's impending fate.

Full well we know how the hero brave
The tempting ransom refusal gave—
How the axe's blow
Showed the jewel's glow
That the cunning heathen strove to save.

Thank God, to-day, that the world can show
Brave souls who stand by an idol so.
They break, not sell,
And we know full well
Thro' the riven shrine what jewels glow.

Charity

I found my friend like a folded flower
Not fully blown.
Ah! folded thus, how rarely sweet
Her virtues shone!

One ill-starred hour I pulled apart
A tiny leaf
And found a faded, blemished spot
Concealed beneath.

I quickly folded back the leaf,
But yet—I saw
Thro' all the bloom so gayly shown
That single flaw.
Then one sweet morn, I, weeping,
Thought of all the years
That Love had kept the fault concealed,
And thro' my tears
I looked, when lo! a wondrous thing,
'T is past belief!
There was no change, but yet, I saw
A perfect leaf.

Our Limitation

If thou wouldst hold thy friend to thee
Be sure that never day shall be
When he may say, "I now know all
That thou dost think, that thou dost call
From out the farthest recess hid
Within thy mind." Ah! thou must bid
A curtain fall and leave the folds
Where, plainly shown, thy friend beholds
And curious stands with questionings—
"What hides he yet of wondrous things?"

Then thou art safe, for friends depart
When once they know thy utmost art.

Hatred *in Nubibus*

I built a wall to hide thee,
  Thou neighbor, that I hate!
Why, then, dost ever mock me
  By knocking at my gate?

The neighbor naught replying,
  I climbed the wall to see.
When a vacant house my spying
  Alone revealed to me.

My fancy did the leading
  Through those resentful years:
My neighbor, never heeding,
  Had dwelt remote from fears.

Thy Beulah Land

(Isaiah.)

No more shall desolations fall
Upon thy vales or mountains tall.
The desert blossoms as the rose
And sunshine, warm and mellow, glows
On every hill. Rich fruits hang low
And topmost boughs bend low and glow
With ripening fruit. The fir tree stands
Where once the thorn thrust spiny hands.
And soft and sweet where briers grew
The wind's low music murmurs through
The myrtle boughs. O'er Achor's vales
The herds repose: no foe assails,
And Sharon shows warm, peaceful folds,
Where flocks abound. All Nature holds
Fair Gilead's balm for longing mind.
O! happy people, thus to find
The touch of such a loving Hand
Transforming earth to Beulah Land.

One Flower of All

"Only one poor, little flower plowed under."
—Alice Cary.

The lily lifts its snowy cup
In fragrance up.
I know, indeed, the rose is here.
The pinks appear
In dear, old-fashioned places
With loving faces.
The maiden-hair waves dainty plumes
From ferny homes.
The woods are soft with moss,
They know no loss.

I still must grieve, e'en tho' you say
That I some day
Shall find full sheaves of golden wheat
And treasures sweet
Above the sod that hides my flower.
Too sad the hour
That turns the sod upon my one
Whose sweet life 's done.

—Written after the death of my dear little brother Frank.

Motherhood

"Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? Am not I better to thee than ten sons?"
—I Samuel i, 8.

Hear the low, sweet answer of the mother-heart—
"God doth create two loves so far apart,
My husband, that there lies between
A wide, deep river on whose breast serene
A myriad golden chords doth bind and cross
Each other, joining so that never any loss
Of love is known to either, for He lays
These wondrous threads, tho' running many ways,
With one sure gathering in a mother's hand.
I weep when I behold in all the land
These happy mothers and I find my own
Palm empty. Blame me not if here alone
I go to pray: for I would lay my hand
In thine, fast holding the sweet, thrilling band
Of baby fingers. God will hear my prayer
And grant to us a child, whose only care
Will be to make the world more true and good
For Him who gave the gift of motherhood.

Identification

Now, why should I call this child of the street
A kinsman of mine?
What crest can he show of the curious design
That the world, which I honor, shall know is a sign
Of kinsman of mine?

Ah! behind him is standing One ready to greet
Him as son—*my* Father! how can I repeat
Any challenge to him? 'T is a brother I meet
With a bond all complete.

The Brother of Low Estate

" Bowed by the weight of centuries, he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox."
—Edwin Markham in " The Man With the Hoe."

"Brother to the ox!" Is this the meaning
Upon the roughened palm, the stooping back?
The long, close-written pedigree that lacks
No record of continuous toil? Gleaning
No hour of joy, no recompense? Leaning
Across the years, do we find only racks
Of torture? See but stupid, backward tracks,
With never upturned face to read the meaning
The Lord God writes upon the "peaks of song?"
O God, forbid! Shall we judge all the yield
That to the centuries' harvesting belongs
By one sad, straggling growth within the field?
Time's tragedy is there, and cruel wrongs
That centuries have made and left unhealed.

But surely 'gainst the dreary canvas falls
Some gleam of light upon that "slanted brow."
The "silence of the centuries" allows
Interpretation now, as bugle call,
To set our own to thundering at the wall
To let in light. By so much he is now
Above his dumb yoke-fellow at the plow.

So far, he 's past the darkest hour of all;
By so much he is nearer to the dawn,
Though still he 's deaf to "music of the spheres."
Who made him dull? By whom were drawn
Those bars that doomed a Soul to stunted years
Instead of growth?—why question? We are born
To free him. Why yield, then, to childish fears?

There 's One who helps. He grants us all a place
To grow, though blind to Pleiades' far swing
Across the sky: though deaf to music's ring
In rapturous dream: though dull to Nature's grace,
Yet as safe-hidden in its wondrous case,
The chrysalis, with patient, folded wing,
Brooks never once man's clever mastering.
So lives the stunted peasant, brute in face
And gesture, holding what man can not mar
Nor make. Lift cruel hands, O masters! Wait
And work with One who hides the tyrant's scar.
He presses back with Love compassionate
The dreadful Terror threatening near and far.
Cease wailing o'er the world's impending fate,
For God is with the man of low estate.

The Brotherhood of Man

What means it now, this current phrase,
Rung out so oft in many ways?
We asked, and we were answered soon.
A-down the scorching street that noon
We saw a boy come creeping o'er
The burning pave. Foot-sore
And weary. Lagging feet
Made never haste the shade to meet.

A comrade came from out a gate:
"Hi, Jocky, run," he called, "you 're late!"
For answer, Jocky shook his head
And raised a blistered foot instead.
No shoes! The stones had burnt the flesh
To torturing state. Each step afresh
The misery grew. Then down
The comrade knelt; his brown
Hands swiftly loosed his ragged shoe,
Revealing there the blisters, too.

He thrust it toward the suffering lad.
"Here, take it, Jock; mine ain't so bad."
Then, quickly turning, sped away.
Then we, through tears, beheld the Way,
The Truth, the Life, as One had taught
Long since, and Brotherhood had wrought.

Ploughed Under

A turn of the plough and the light was gone,
With a darkness drawn too close and deep
For a hint of dawn to the seeds asleep.

Asleep in the dark! Could a dream be there,
That high in the air was a lark's clear call
To the daylight fair? But was it a dream?

O, Power of Life!
What a puny strife
Man sets for Thee
When the air is rife
With a will *to be.*
Yet man has not read immortality.

Her Gift

"The great Artificer, in putting together your individual nature, did not forget this crowning gift any more than He forgets o add its own fragrance to the arbutus or its own song to the ark." —Frances E. Willard in "How to Win."

What was it, then, for her,—
This matchless thing
Which nothing should deter
From taking wing?

What power, latent, still
Lay folded in
The chrysalis of will
To help her win?

No rhythmic melody of thought
Was hers; no speech
Quick flowing at the moment sought;
Nor could she teach.

No special duty came
To view. Alway
Her work-days were the same,
Day after day.

Then, bowing low, she prayed,
Lord, show me light,
For truly Thou hast made
This clearer sight.

And since I see, wilt Thou
Grant further gift,
And teach me where and how
Mine eyes to lift?

After long, weary years
Of earnest seeking,
She found with quiet tears
Her gift in keeping.

For Patience, gift so rare,
Had crowned her days,
And brought her now to share
The winner's praise.

Let the Flag be There

—After hearing an old soldier say, "There 's too many flowers, I can't see the flag."

Long ago, when we marched away,
Flowers and flags made pathways gay.
Roses lay on the coats of blue,
Flung by sweethearts dear and true.

Flowers and flags! But e'er the hour
Of parting passed lay every flower
Withered and dead: a sadder thing,
O comrades, then for the breeze to fling
Than the bonnie stars that floated high
With a deathless beauty toward the sky.

Lay it over the roses red,
It came back with the heroes dead;
It went with them thro' strain of heart
Life and country and death a part.
Whether a shroud or a banner free,
Ever the flag was there to see.
Over the graves lay flowers fair,
But over all, may our flag be there!

Memorial Day, 1896.

The Outgrown Nest

But you ask, "Is Life
Forever at strife
With a growth to be?"
O, no! for the wings
Of these fledgling things
Will larger grow.
When the need to fly
To the far, blue sky,
Where their nest-mates go.

Questionings

A world so still at our feet
That we hear its pulses beat
With a rhythmic, monotonous repetition,
So free from strife.

Then the beautiful calm is lost
And the pulse is fever tossed
In a maddening, struggling competition.
Now, which is Life?

With Broken Harp

Life met me with a broken harp
And bade me sing:
Then filled my soul with strangely sweet
Interpretings.

I wept, rebellious, when I saw
The broken thing
And knew the rhythm in my soul
I ne'er should sing.

No sadder thing can be, I cried,
Than this—to sing
The soul's melodious rhapsodies
With broken string.

But years have taught this sadder thing—
A harp complete,
Yet in the soul discordant sounds
Its chords to meet.

Found

—Rossetti's unfinished picture called "Found" shows a countryman meeting his sweetheart, who had been lost, in every sense, in London.

So much we see upon the canvas thrown—
The London Bridge; the rustic lover's swift,
Despairing look for aid, as he would lift
The fainting girl, who crouches 'gainst the stone
And begs him to leave her and her guilt alone.
O, sad, unfinished theme! We read no shrift
For sinning soul. We see no jot of sorrow lift
From that young face, now old with anguish grown.

We dream their story, writ in country lane—
A tender pastoral. We question how the maid
E'er left its music for the harsh refrain
Of city streets. O skillful brush, that laid
The sequel bare! O artist wise, to drain
Thy pigments dry! Man's touch would seem profane.

Hester Prynne

"She will not speak!"—Dimmersdale in "The Scarlet Letter."

Yea, silent yet, tho' hushed they stand and wait—
That crowd, all silent, too, with judging stare
More keenly felt and harder still to bear
Than all their censure. Can she love or hate
So well that she can hold the guilty mate
Of her own sin a secret, now, to keep
Through such disgrace?
Aye, tho' the babe should weep,
She will not speak. "Hester, speak; 't is not too late."
The pastor's voice, entreating, silence broke,
While o'er the scarlet letter shone the sun,
And Hester saw and heard and woke
As from a dream. "Nay, it is done:
I 'll bear the shame alone!" O, woman's heart!
This could not be, did God not bear a part.

Plagiarism

What plagiarists you are, ye poets crowned,
Who write us verse to bring the moonlit night
A-near, interpreting to duller sight
Poetic beauties that you say abound
In Nature's strongholds, ne'er to be found
Save by a Poet's prying. While you write,
One, listening in the woods with never right
To scholar's gown, interprets all the sound
From primrose banks of whip-poor-will's clear call.
You make no clearer "music of the spheres"
When you repeat the scene in rhythmic fall
Of many words. With lifted hat, he hears
In those bird-notes the wondrous theme of all
Thy poems, nay, has heard them all the years.

Why Waits Queen Summer?

Why waits Queen Summer when the Autumn haze
  Comes stealing thro' the gates that open wide
  On frosty hinge? Ah! gathered at her side,
Rose spirits keep a tryst made those June days
When, wild with joy in rose-embowered ways,
  Queen Summer promised, in her joy and pride,
  Returning bloom to every rose that died.
With trailing scepter, now, she turns to gaze
  On generous Autumn.
                Will he aid her now?
For answer, lo! the woods and fields aglow
  With tints incarnate of that reckless vow
In far-off June, but yet no roses blow
  For perfume; life of every rose is lost
  In all the jeweled splendor of the frost.

Indian Summer

O! Autumn, hang thy crimson banners low
And hide the frost-tipped maple leaves, for see,
The Summer has not gone: far o'er the lea
E'en now we hear midsummer sounds and know
How glad the cricket is for mellow glow
Of summer sun to warm him. Melody
From birds now southward bound in ecstasy
We hear, late flying thro' the thistle's snow.

O, man! Be glad that in life's later years
There comes this quiet time e'er yet the frost
Shuts out Life's summer. Stay thy wearing fears
And see again the joys you thought were lost.
For lo! no happier thing in life we know
Than this returning dream of long ago.

The Thanksgiving Test

The years hold each a time when we may test
  Our own progression in the race we run
  So fast we scarce can see if we have done
That which maturer judgment may call best.
Full oft we question with a quickened zest
  For better things. Was that a goal well won?
  Or was it reached by meanly shoving one
Aside more weary grown with greater need of rest?

Give thanks! The clear command strikes thro' the
      mind
  With rapid search for cause for Thankfulness.
If we can find but selfishness defined
  In our review 't is certain we have less
Progression made than one long left behind
  Who 's helped some other soul to happiness.

The Day's Reckoning

When morning dawned for us, what wondrous deeds
To help the world did we resolve to do!
With joyful haste did we begin to strew
The way with flowers plucked in dewy meads—
Sweet, common blossoms that we tho't were weeds.
And hastened on to where, with purpose true,
We might do service, knowing not that few
Great deeds are numbered in the World's deep needs.

And lo! in the swift journey of the day
This was revealed. No greater deed was done
Than that first cheerful strewing of the way
With bloom where tired feet had hourly run
On greater errands.
Yet blind are we
Who watch Life's distant heights so wistfully.

St. Silverus: A Christmas Legend

Long, long ago there came a peasant lad
With his own Yuletide sheaf of perfect wheat,
And stood, with modest looks, in wait, to greet
The wondrous King. Around him rang the glad
Hosannas; but his heart grew strangely sad
To see the hungry birds, too weak to meet
The peasant's blows, fly here and there with sweet,
Imploring cries. At last, he sobbed, "Yea, Lord, I had
A perfect sheaf; but these so hungry are,
What can I do but give?" Then, wondrous thing!
The birds, with carols sweet, flew to a star,
And Silverus, in trembling haste, did bring
His sheaf; for lo! the Holy One afar,
With tender smile, did take his offering.

An Autumn Thought

When Autumn throws that witching, amber haze
  O'er woods and hills and dales as if to hide
  The splendor of the world on every side,
We know 't is Nature's tenderness that lays
A shadow lest we shrink from Winter's grays,
  Whose sentinels of frost e'en now abide
Near every gorgeous plant whose bloom has died
  E'er yet the coming of the bleak, cold days.

So age doth find a dimming veil between
  Life's sweet, entrancing dreams of green and gold.
Like the autumnal haze thro' which are seen
  The quiet grays so near—the story told
Of all the bloom and seed that now lies low
In patient waiting for the Winter's snow.

MAY 10 1909

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 015 909 213 6